Sustainability on campus

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Body

SPU students plant seeds in Weter Hall during the Earth Day Celebration hosted by Upperclass & Commuter Ministries and the Sustainability Club on Thursday, April 20, 2023. (Gemma Cannon-Green)

Sustainability is crucial every day, not exclusively on Earth Day. The Earth needs people to take care of it, and organizations like Seattle Pacific University's Sustainability Club are stepping up to take on this mission.

Students at SPU are often taught in their classes to combine theology and science while attempting to solve the world's current and urgent environmental issues. These issues include climate change, waste, carbon emissions and global warming.

Although the SPU Sustainability Club is relatively small, its work is essential. Every effort to reverse the deteriorating status of the planet is a step in the right direction. The goal is to make the Earth healthier, which the Sustainability Club aims to do.

Fourth year president of the Sustainability Club, Eli Westbrooks, created the club to further his vocational calling.

"I started the club as I was called to follow my vocation to be a good steward of the Earth, which, in turn, led me to start the Sustainability Club in 2022. I was appointed the president as one of the core founding members," Westbrooks said.

Any student can join the Sustainability Club every Tuesday in the Eaton 305 at 4 p.m. Westbrooks believes the club is a great place to find a community of people who share the same love for Earth preservation.

"They can look forward to events that build and foster community relationships on campus by attending events centered around sustainability together," Westbrooks said.

According to third year nursing major and member of the club, Madai Molina Apolinar, they allow students to educate themselves about their impacts on the planet.

"Students can learn more about what is going on to the Earth and the impacts of climate change. They unite and come up with ideas for where we can make some changes in our SPU community to make it more sustainable," Molina Apolinar said.

In the 2022-23 school year, the Sustainability Club has been involved in a few campus events. One of these events was on Thursday, April 20, for Earth Day in collaboration with Upperclass and Commuter Ministries and Commuter Life in a veggie plant giveaway.

The other event took place on Wednesday, April 26, as a collaboration with SPU Dining Services to inform students of how to minimize their carbon imprint. Students were taught about the positive impacts a vegetarian lifestyle has on the environment and the well-being of the planet.

Students chose between three vegetarian menu options during the event such as pineapple teritaki impossible burger, chick'n bolognese and roasted vegetable pizza.

The club also partners with campus organizations to visit places off campus and inform the greater community of Seattle of sustainability practices. Recently the club partnered with the John Perkins Center to complete a learn-and-serve opportunity with the Daybreak Star Native Cultural Center.

Besides off-campus events, students can engage with campus spaces and the SPU community. The Sustainability Club works in the Garden of Eaton Greenhouse and the SPU Garden. The garden is a new addition to the campus as of October 2022 and is run by the club.

During fall quarter, they planted cherry tomatoes in the SPU Garden. And, during spring quarter, the club began growing sunflowers and pumpkins in the Garden of Eaton Greenhouse.

The Sustainability Club is important because of the community it builds for the students to collaborate and demonstrate their care for creation by engaging with nature. They can learn how to better their environmental practices to lessen their impact on climate change.

"We value students' impact on making a more sustainable campus," Westbrook said. "We also inspire them to raise awareness of climate justice for all on Earth not just those on SPU's campus."

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